

program or using it as an ATM for the top 2 percents.

Happy birthday, Medicare. If we stay true to our values, you will have many happy returns.

PROTECTING AMERICAN JOBS AND SECURING AMERICA'S ENERGY FUTURE

(Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, the administration's war on coal led the Office of Surface Mining and Reclamation to try and change a rule that would redefine what is considered a stream as it pertains to mining operations.

I am pleased than an amendment I offered during the debate over the budget continuing resolution has been included in the Interior appropriations bill in an effort to stop this irresponsible regulatory overreach.

No one is surprised that the Obama administration is continuing the war on coal, but this is also a war on jobs. And the coal industry employs thousands of people in eastern and southeastern Ohio.

Mr. Speaker, we all want a cleaner environment, but we need to make sure that the policies being enacted are common sense and do not come at the expense of jobs and our economy. Stopping the Obama administration from rewriting the stream buffer zone rule will be a victory for jobs and a defeat to a radical agenda that is seeking to outlaw coal entirely. We can and we must enact smart policies that clean up our environment while protecting American jobs.

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MEDICARE

(Mr. BACA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BACA. Mr. Speaker, as the deadline nears for Americans to raise its debt limit, the American people have sent a clear message to all of us:

They will not stand for a budget that is balanced on the backs of seniors and the middle class.

The American people know that it is wrong to privatize Medicare with a new voucher program, to cut guaranteed health benefits for seniors and to sacrifice Medicaid services for the poor and disabled.

It's not too late for us to compromise on a balanced approach. Yes, we can trim spending with intelligent cuts, but we must end tax breaks for the ultra rich. I state: We must end tax breaks for the ultra rich and corporations that shift jobs overseas.

No new taxes equals no new jobs. No taxes—no jobs.

We have an historic opportunity in front of us. Let's stop the partisan

bickering and work together on a plan that strengthens the middle class, lowers our deficit and creates new jobs here at home.

THE DEBT CEILING REDUCTION ACT

(Mr. BROWN of Georgia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BROWN of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, we have overspent and we are over-extended. Now we have to get out of debt.

For the last 20 years, we have been increasing the debt ceiling and allowing Washington to spend more and more of the taxpayers' money. This method of madness hasn't worked, and today, our economy is suffering because of it.

Yesterday, I introduced a unique bill that would lower the debt ceiling to \$13 trillion. This proposal would force Washington to make the spending cuts that we so desperately need to pay down the debt.

State and local governments, businesses and families understand, when you've maxed out your credit card, you can't just give yourself a credit increase. Instead, you have to cut spending and pay down your bills. The Federal Government is the only entity that does not understand this.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 2409, the Debt Ceiling Reduction Act, because we need to turn this country in a completely different direction.

MAKING AMERICANS SAFER HERE AT HOME

(Mr. CLARKE of Michigan asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CLARKE of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I have a proposal that will help us save tax dollars, pay down our debt, and better protect the American people.

Instead of spending billions and billions of dollars to secure Afghanistan at the rate that we are—and we've spent over a half a trillion of our precious tax dollars in Afghanistan over the last 10 years—I propose to redirect a small share of our tax dollars back to the U.S. and to use our money to hire and equip more police officers, more firefighters, more emergency medical providers, because one of the most effective ways to help protect the American people from a terrorist attack is to make Americans safer right here at home.

THE REPUBLICANS' ALL-OF-THE-ABOVE ENERGY STRATEGY

(Mr. ROE of Tennessee asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, on June 22, President Obama released 30 million barrels of oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve—just over a day's worth of oil. The administration continues to play politics rather than develop a comprehensive national energy plan, which will lay the path for future economic growth, help lower unemployment and improve our stagnant economy. This country's economy was built on inexpensive and abundant energy.

Folks are frustrated now. A fellow stopped me the other day, and said, Doc, it's a sad day when a guy can't buy a gallon of gas and a gallon of milk for \$10.

And it's true. People don't want half measures that don't address their problems. They want solutions. They want to work. They want to provide for their families.

It is way past time to ease this pain at the pump. The President has shown no interest in the Republicans' all-of-the-above energy strategy that encourages oil and natural gas development in places like ANWR and the Outer Continental Shelf. With national unemployment stubbornly above 9 percent, the American people expect us to work together to lower the cost of energy, reduce our dependency on foreign oil and create American jobs.

OPPOSING THE PRIVATIZATION OF AMTRAK

(Mr. SIREs asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. SIREs. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to oppose the privatization of Amtrak, which would threaten reliable, dependable, and accessible passenger rail service throughout the United States. I travel home every weekend on Amtrak to my district in New Jersey, and its service is an essential part of our region's economic vitality.

Under the plan to privatize Amtrak, the essential service they provide to millions of passengers could be lost, and nearly 20,000 Amtrak jobs could be eliminated. State-owned infrastructure that Amtrak currently maintains could be turned over to the already deficit-burdened States to maintain. It is likely that station stops will be cut and that commuter rail services will bear increased costs. Additionally, freight railroads that currently use Amtrak-supported lines may face logistical problems if Amtrak becomes privatized.

Under the proposal to privatize Amtrak, many important labor provisions will be eliminated. Future railroad employees will be exempt from disability, pension, retirement, and unemployment benefits. By removing future employees from these benefit systems, current and retired employees will be negatively affected, and railroads will face increased taxes to maintain the solvency of these systems.

I urge my colleagues to oppose the privatization of Amtrak.